SPECIES AT RISK

in the Northwest Territories

2012

Canada

Northwest Territories

Species at Risk in the NWT

A guide to species in the NWT currently listed, or considered for listing, under federal and territorial species at risk legislation, 2012 edition.

Copies of this document are available from:

Environment Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service
Prairie and Northern Region
PO Box 2310
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Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
Toll-Free 1-855-783-4301

Also available in French under the title:
Espèces en péril aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest : un guide des espèces des TN-O incluses dans la liste légale sous la Loi sur les espèces en péril fédérale et autres espèces considérées, édition 2012.

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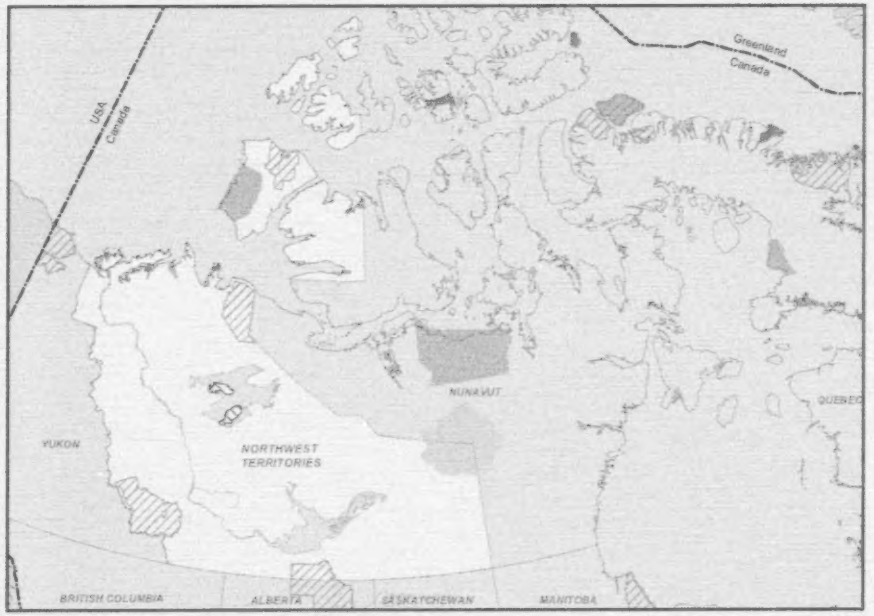


Migratory Bird Sanctuaries
Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary
National Wildlife Areas
National Parks
National Historic Sites

Whooping Crane

Species at Risk in the NWT

Aboriginal groups, scientists and people with an interest in the natural world have noticed and documented the disappearance of certain plants and animals for some time.

Every jurisdiction in Canada has signed the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk* and in doing so, has agreed to work towards a national approach for protecting species at risk, with the goal of preventing species in Canada from becoming extinct as a consequence of human activity.

The responsibility for the conservation of wildlife in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is shared by the federal, territorial, and Tłı̨chǫ governments, and wildlife co-management boards. The federal government is responsible for migratory birds, aquatic species and terrestrial species found on federal lands. The territorial government has primary responsibility for other species.

In 2003, the Government of Canada enacted the *Species at Risk Act* with the goal of protecting wildlife species and their habitats. The purposes of the *Species at Risk Act* are to prevent wildlife species from being Extirpated or becoming Extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are Extirpated, Endangered or Threatened as a result of human activity, and to manage Species of Special Concern to prevent them from becoming Endangered or Threatened. The Act establishes a process for conducting scientific assessments of the national population status of individual species, and a mechanism for listing Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern species. The *Species at Risk Act* includes provisions for the protection of individuals of listed wildlife species, and for their critical habitats and residences.

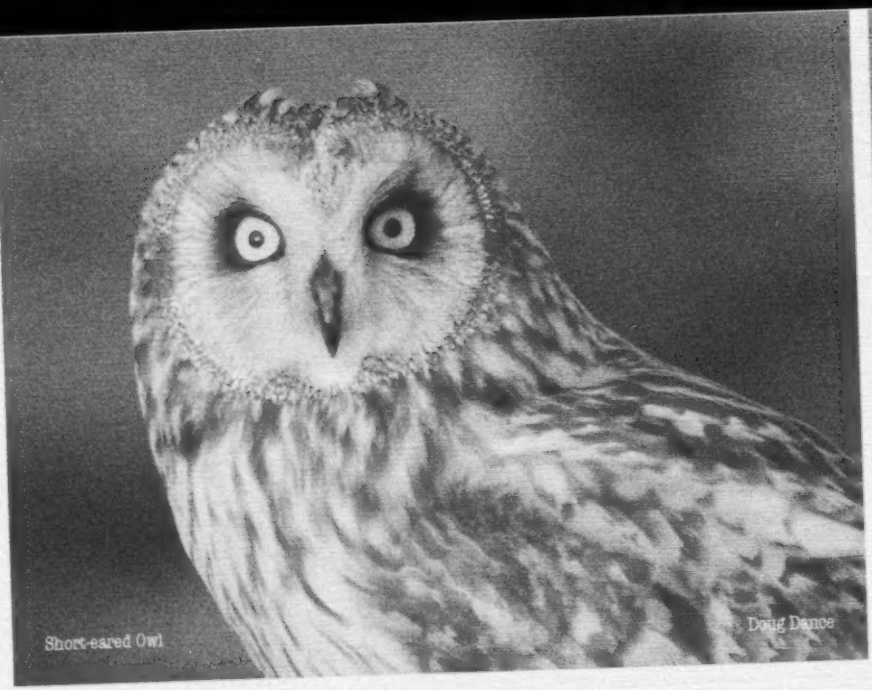
In 2009, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) passed the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* which helps fulfill the NWT's commitment under the national Accord to provide effective legal protection. *The Species at Risk (NWT) Act* sets out the processes to assess, list, protect and recover species at risk specifically for the NWT. *The Species at Risk (NWT) Act* applies to any wild animal or plant species managed by the GNWT. It applies everywhere in the NWT, on both public and private lands, including private lands owned under a land claims agreement.

The *Species at Risk Act* and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* are designed to work in a complementary fashion with other legislation and cooperatively with Aboriginal people to protect species at risk and their habitats.

For more information, visit:
sararegistry.gc.ca
nwtspeciesatrisk.ca

Assessment and Listing of Species at Risk in Canada

Boreal Caribou



Short-eared Owl

Assessment and Listing of Species at Risk in Canada

Assessment: The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is a national committee of experts that assesses the biological status of species and assigns each one to a category of risk based on the best available scientific, community and Aboriginal traditional knowledge. COSEWIC makes a recommendation on "risk level" to the federal government. The list of all the species recommended by COSEWIC for listing as a species at risk is the COSEWIC list.

Legal Listing: After receiving COSEWIC's assessment and consulting with the appropriate Minister(s) and wildlife co-management boards, the Minister makes a recommendation to the Governor in Council and the decision is made on whether to add species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1) of the *Species at Risk Act* or to refer the matter back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.

Assessment and Listing of Species at Risk in the NWT

Conference of Management Authorities: Responsibility for the conservation and recovery of species at risk in the NWT is shared among wildlife co-management boards established under land claim agreements, the GNWT, the Tłı̨chǫ Government and the federal government. The Conference established under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* builds consensus among these Management Authorities on the conservation of species at risk and provides direction, coordination and leadership with respect to the assessment, listing, conservation and recovery of species at risk while respecting the roles and responsibilities of Management Authorities under land claims agreements.

Assessment: The Species at Risk Committee established under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* is an independent committee of experts responsible for assessing the biological status of species at risk in the NWT. It is similar to COSEWIC, although the Species at Risk Committee operates at the territorial level and assessments may differ from those done at the national level. Assessments will be based on the best available traditional, community and scientific knowledge of the species. The Committee will use the assessments to make recommendations on the listing of species and on conservation measures to the Conference of Management Authorities.

Legal Listing: The Conference of Management Authorities will develop a consensus agreement on whether a species will be added to the NWT List of Species at Risk. As part of reaching consensus, each co-management board carries out the consultation and processes required under their land claim agreement. The GNWT is responsible for Aboriginal consultation in areas without a settled land claim and for consultation with all stakeholders such as industry, outfitters, resident hunters, environmental groups, and the public.

This booklet describes the species legally listed under the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, and describes those species whose range includes the NWT that are under consideration for listing, as of March 2012. National assessments of species are completed every six months. As there is no pre-set federal listing schedule, it is important to regularly visit the federal *Species at Risk Act* Public Registry at sararegistry.gc.ca, or the COSEWIC website at cosewic.gc.ca for the most recent information. At the time of printing no species have been assessed or listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* processes. As these become available, they will be posted at nwtspeciesatrisk.ca.

How to Use this Guide

STATUS

Animal Name

Subspecies or Population

Scientific Name

A physical description of the animal size, weight and colour including any distinguishing marks or behaviours.

Help identify and record species in the NWT by reporting your sightings to the appropriate agency

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Threats to a species can vary between regions in Canada. The information in this section describes specific threats to the species in the NWT.

Typical Habitat

- The information in this section describes the typical habitat of the species in the NWT.

Range Map

- The range map shows the distribution of each species in the NWT so that you can determine at a glance where they occur. Please note that the species range maps in this booklet are approximate and are not intended for legal use.

This section contains additional information about the species in the NWT. For the most current information, visit sararegistry.gc.ca or nwtspeciesatrisk.ca

Categories of Species at Risk

Species at risk are listed in one of five categories:

Extinct: a species that no longer exists anywhere in the world.

Extirpated: a species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere.

Endangered: a species that is facing imminent extirpation or extinction.

Threatened: a species likely to become an endangered species if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.

Special Concern: a species that may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Did you know?

- The information in this section highlights interesting facts about the species.

Website where you can find the most current information on the species.

ENDANGERED
Peary Caribou
Rangifer tarandus pearyi

Peary Caribou are the smallest of all caribou subspecies. In winter, they have a mostly white coat. Their summer coat is slate-grey with white legs and underparts. The velvet covering the antlers is grey, unlike the dark brown velvet of Barren-ground Caribou.

Weight: Males, 70 kg (150 lb)
Length: 1.7 m (5.6 ft)

Report Peary Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

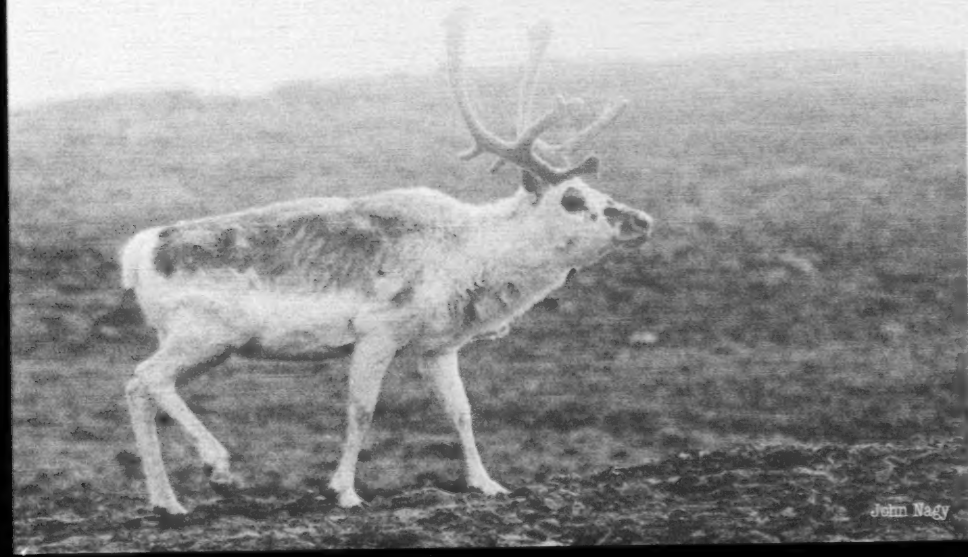
- Peary Caribou are found in small groups on the Arctic islands of the NWT and Nunavut.
- Summer range includes river valley slopes or other moist areas, and upland plains with abundant sedges, willows, grasses, and herbs.
- Winter range includes exposed areas like hilltops and raised beach ridges where the snow is thinner and it is easier to find food.

Peary Caribou
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

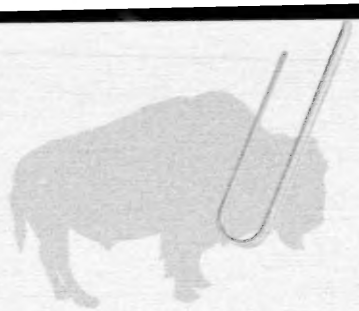
- Severe winter and spring weather creates ice layers preventing Peary Caribou from reaching their food, sometimes causing starvation or inadequate fat reserves for females to reproduce.
- Competition with muskoxen for food.
- Hunting and predation may have contributed to population declines on Banks and Northwest Victoria Islands.

Peary Caribou populations declined steeply between the 1960s and the 1990s likely due to a combination of factors including several years of unusually severe winter and spring weather. Since then, low numbers remain relatively stable but show no evidence of recovery in the NWT. A national recovery strategy for Peary Caribou is being developed in cooperation with local communities, wildlife management boards, and federal/territorial departments.


John Nagy

Did you know?

- The Inuvialuit have taken a strong leadership role in protecting Peary Caribou. Due to community concerns in Sachs Harbour, a harvest quota on hunting Peary Caribou was implemented in 1990 and is now reviewed annually.
- In 1993, the Olokhaktomiut Hunters and Trappers Committee (Ulukhaktok) initiated a zero harvest on Peary Caribou from northwest Victoria Island to help ensure that only Dolphin-Union Caribou were harvested from southwest Victoria Island.



THREATENED

Wood Bison

Bison bison athabascae

Wood Bison are the largest land mammals in North America. They are dark brown, have a massive head, a distinct beard, a shoulder hump and curved horns.

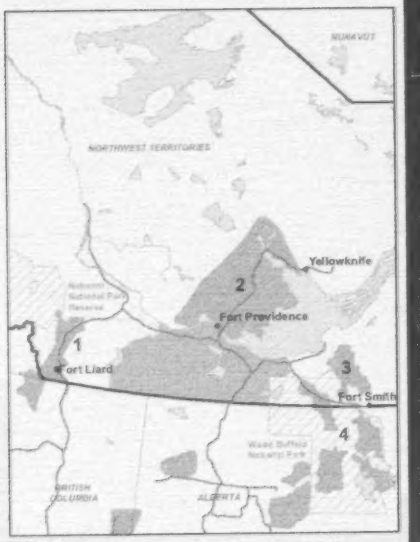
Weight: Females, 500 to 550 kg (1100 to 1200 lb)
Males, 650 to 1080 kg (1430 to 2400 lb)

Height at shoulder: 1.5 to 2.0 m (4 to 6 ft)

Report Wood Bison sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Slave River Lowlands and Mackenzie: willow savannas with grasses and sedges.
- Liard River drainage: meadows and oxbows with sedges and horsetails.



1 Nahanni Population
2. Mackenzie Population
3a. Slave River Lowlands Population
3b. Wood Buffalo National Park Population

Wood Bison
Bison Control Area
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Diseases including anthrax, brucellosis, and tuberculosis.
- Expanding agriculture and forestry and collisions with traffic.
- Spring floods and falling through thin ice.
- Limited genetic diversity in disease-free populations due to small number of animals initially introduced into those areas.

Once on the verge of extinction due to over-hunting and disease, Wood Bison now occur in the NWT in three free-ranging herds. The Mackenzie and Nahanni populations are disease-free. The greater Wood Buffalo National Park population, which includes bison in the Slave River Lowlands, is infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis. Goals and direction for Wood Bison management in the NWT have been outlined in the *Wood Bison Management Strategy for the NWT: 2010-2020*. A national recovery stragey for Wood Bison is being developed.

Terry Armstrong

Did you know?

- A Bison Control Area was created to prevent the spread of diseases to the healthy Mackenzie and Nahanni populations. All bison in the control area are presumed to be disease carriers and are therefore removed.
- The Mackenzie population of 1600 bison is the largest free-ranging disease-free herd in the world.

The Nahanni population surveys found close to 400 bison in both 2004 and 2011.

- The Slave River Lowlands population seems to be reversing a lengthy decline and has about 1700 bison on the east and west sides of the Slave River outside of Wood Buffalo National Park.

THREATENED

Boreal Caribou

Woodland Caribou (Boreal Population)

Rangifer tarandus caribou

Boreal and Northern Mountain Caribou look the same but it is their habitat preferences and behaviour that separate these two populations. Boreal Caribou are larger, darker, have thicker and broader antlers, longer legs and a longer face than Barren-ground Caribou.

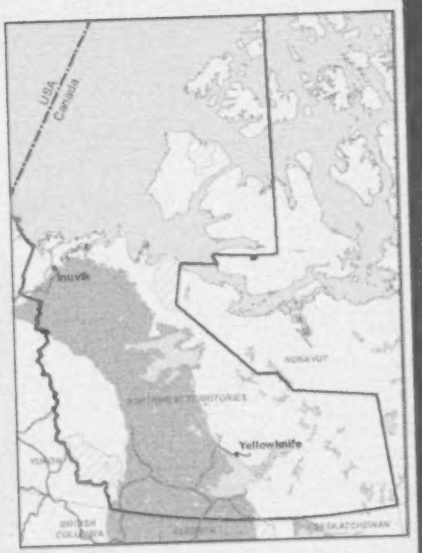
Weight: 110 to 210 kg (240 to 460 lb)

Height at shoulder: 1.0 to 1.2 m (3.3 to 4.0 ft)

Report Boreal Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Almost all forested areas east of the Mackenzie Mountains, provided they are in or are able to access areas away from human disturbance, industrial areas, and other human made features.



Woodland Caribou Boreal Population

National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat changes (especially landscape changes from oil and gas) that result in increased access by predators and hunters.
- Climate change that will likely affect the forest landscape over the next 20-40 years.

Woodland Caribou are divided into two types, Boreal Caribou and Northern Mountain Caribou. Boreal Caribou live in the forests east of the Mackenzie Mountains. They live in small groups and prefer to stay within the forest year-round. A national recovery strategy for Boreal Caribou should be ready in 2012. Goals and direction for the conservation of Boreal Caribou in the Northwest Territories have been outlined in the *Action Plan for Boreal Woodland Caribou Conservation in the Northwest Territories: 2010-2015.*

John Nagy

Did you know?

- There is limited harvesting of Boreal Caribou in the NWT. Aboriginal harvest is low and there is a limit of one animal per year for resident hunters.
- Boreal caribou are sometimes called the "grey ghosts of the forest" because they are secretive and difficult to find, and when disturbed they usually disappear quickly into the forest.

For the most current information, visit: nwtspeciesatrisk.ca

SPECIAL CONCERN

Northern Mountain Caribou

Woodland Caribou (Northern Mountain Population)

Rangifer tarandus caribou

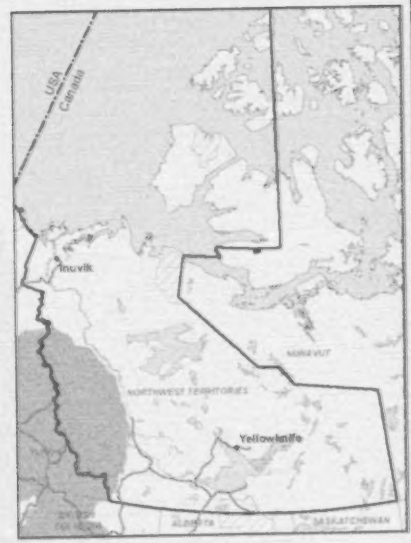
Boreal and Northern Mountain Caribou look the same but it is their habitat preferences and behaviour that separate these two populations. Northern Mountain Caribou are larger, darker, have thicker and broader antlers, longer legs and a longer face than Barren-ground Caribou.

Weight: 110 to 210 kg (240 to 460 lb)
Height at shoulder: 1.0 to 1.2 m (3.3 to 4.0 ft)

Report Northern Mountain Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Throughout the Mackenzie Mountains in open alpine and subalpine areas in summer, and montane spruce-lichen forest areas with shallow snow cover in winter.



Woodland Caribou
Northern Mountain Population

National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Limited threats - there are some concerns about increased hunting pressure from people using access roads and increased mineral exploration activities.
- Climate change that will likely affect the forest landscape over the next 20-40 years.

Woodland Caribou are divided into two types, Boreal Caribou and Northern Mountain Caribou. Northern Mountain Caribou live in the Mackenzie Mountains in large groups, sometimes in the thousands, and have distinct migrations where they move up or down in elevation depending on the season. A national management plan for Northern Mountain Caribou was completed in 2011 and can be found on the SARA Registry.

Did you know?

- There is limited harvesting of Northern Mountain Caribou in the Northwest Territories. Non-resident hunting is only allowed in the Mackenzie Mountains, and for resident and non-resident hunters there is a limit of one animal per year.
- Unique among members of the deer family, caribou are the only species where both males and females have antlers.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Dolphin-Union Caribou

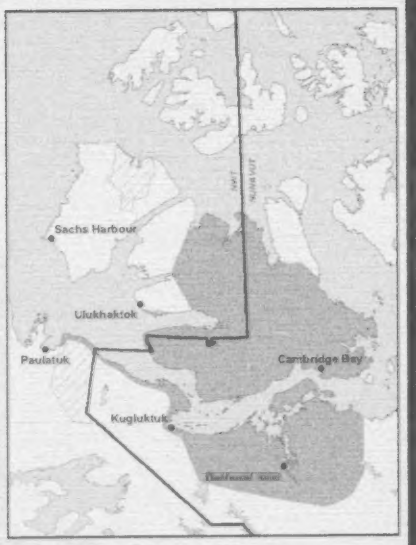
Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus x pearyi

Dolphin-Union Caribou look similar to Peary Caribou (mostly white coat in winter, slate-grey with white legs and under-parts in summer), but are slightly darker. The velvet covering their antlers is grey.

Report Dolphin-Union Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Summer on Victoria Island, commonly using beach ridges and river valley slopes.
- Winter primarily in the Bathurst Inlet area of Nunavut but have been found near mainland shoreline areas west to Tuktut Nogait National Park in windswept areas with shallow snow cover.



Dolphin-Union Caribou
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Hunting rate could lead to over-harvesting.
- Over-grazing in areas where caribou wait before migrating to the mainland for the winter.
- Local knowledge has demonstrated an increase of predators across summer ranges.
- An unknown number of caribou die every fall breaking through the ice crossing to the mainland.
- Changes to sea ice freeze-up and break-up due to climate change could threaten migration.
- Increased ship traffic through Dolphin and Union Strait may affect ice formation and caribou migration.

Dolphin-Union Caribou were once thought to be Peary Caribou; however, genetic studies have now clearly shown that they are distinct. About 27,000 Dolphin-Union Caribou occupy areas in Nunavut and the NWT. These caribou were at very low densities during the mid-20th century and only started recovering about 30 years ago. The main distribution during the calving and fall seasons is on Victoria Island and since the 1980s Dolphin-Union Caribou resumed their migration to winter on the Nunavut-NWT mainland. The population is considered stable at best, or slightly declining.

Mathieu Dumond

Did you know?

- Dolphin-Union Caribou are often locally called Island Caribou.
- The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and the Kitikmeot Hunters and Trappers Association and the Wildlife Advisory Management Council (NWT) have started discussions amongst co-management partners to develop joint management plans for conservation actions.
- The legal listing of Dolphin-Union Caribou in February 2011 will require a national management plan that will include conservation measures.

For the most current information, visit: nwtspeciesatrisk.ca

SPECIAL CONCERN

Bowhead Whale

Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Population

Balaena mysticetus

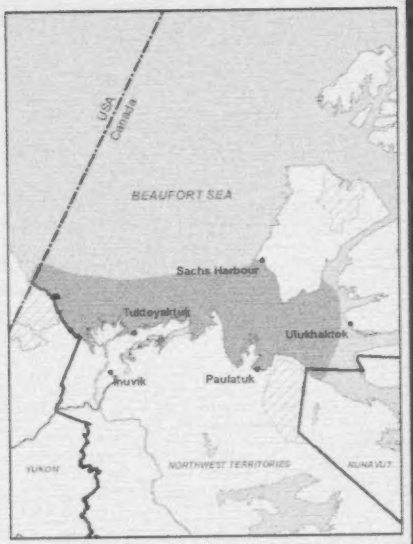
The Bowhead Whale is a large baleen whale (whale with baleen plates for filtering food rather than teeth) with a stocky barrel-shaped body and a large head consisting of about 30% of its length. Its body is mostly black; white markings appear with age on the chin, fluke tips and tail. Their flippers are small and paddle -shaped and they do not have a dorsal fin. The upper jaw is bowed sharply upward with an average of 330 baleen plates on each side. Adult females are slightly larger than adult males.

Weight: 75 to 100 t (82 to 110 tons)
Length: Females, 16 to 18 m (53 to 59 ft.)
Males, 14 to 17 m (46 to 56 ft.)

Report Bowhead Whale sightings to Wildlifedfo@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Marine waters ranging from open water to thick, extensive pack ice.



Bowhead Whale
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Vessel traffic, underwater noise and possible hydrocarbon spills associated with offshore development (such as oil and gas) in the Beaufort Sea.

Bowhead Whales are still recovering from commercial whaling. The Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population of the Bowhead Whale spends the winter in the western and central Bering Sea where there is adequate open water and broken pack ice. In spring, the whales migrate north and east to their summer feeding grounds in the eastern Beaufort Sea. They feed mostly on dense aggregations of small invertebrates or "zooplankton" (mainly copepods, but also euphasiids, mysids, amphipods and isopods). Females give birth every three or four years to a single calf, usually during the spring migration. Bowhead Whales can live to be over 150 years of age.

Marc Gadoury

Did you know?

- A weapon fragment found in a Bowhead Whale caught off the Alaskan coast in May 2007 dated back to 1879.
- Bowhead Whales are able to use their head and back to break ice over 20 cm (8 in) thick, in order to breathe.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Grey Whale

Eastern North Pacific Population

Eschrichtius robustus

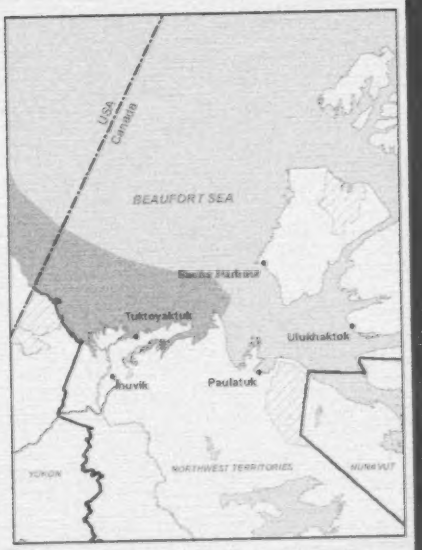
The Grey Whale is a medium- to large-sized baleen whale with a streamlined body and narrow, tapered head. It has dark grey mottled skin, often covered with patches of barnacles and crustaceans. This whale does not have a dorsal fin but has a low hump and a series of seven to fifteen "knuckles" along its dorsal ridge. The Grey Whale is the only large whale whose upper jaw extends beyond the lower. Two to four grooves on the underside of the throat allow the whale to extend its throat so it can feed by scooping up bottom sediment and straining it through its baleen.

Weight: 22 to 38 t (24 to 42 tons)
Length: Females, 12 to 15 m (39 to 50 ft)
Males, 11 to 14 m (36 to 46 ft)

Report Grey Whale sightings to: WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Shallow ocean water (less than 60 m or 200 ft) close to shore, over mud or sand bottoms.



Grey Whale
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss of habitat due to industrial development (such as oil and gas) and associated noise.
- Years with extended ice cover on summer feeding grounds (may lessen with climate change).
- Collisions with ships.

Grey Whales are susceptible to human activities especially while they spend the winter on their calving grounds in Mexico where females give birth to a single calf. In spring most migrate north to their summer feeding grounds in northern Alaska, Russia and the southern Beaufort Sea where they feed mainly on shrimp-like animals (amphipod crustaceans). Calves are weaned in late summer. Grey Whales can live up to 70 years of age.

A. Denbigh

Did you know?

- Because Grey Whales re-circulate nutrients from bottom sediments through the water column, they are an important species in arctic marine ecosystems.
- Grey Whales travel over 16,000 km (9,900 mi) round trip, from the lagoons of Baja California and their feeding grounds in the Bering and Beaufort seas.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Polar Bear

Ursus maritimus

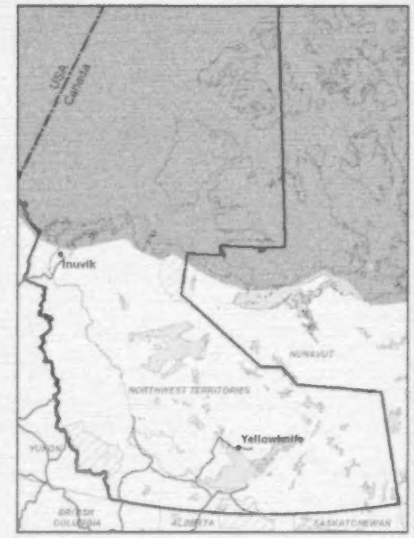
Translucent hairs (sunlight partially goes through them) make Polar Bear fur appear white or off-white. Polar Bears have no shoulder hump, and they have shorter claws and a longer neck than Grizzly Bears.

Weight: Females, less than 350 kg (770 lb)
Males, up to 800kg (1750 lb)

Report Polar Bear sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Habitat closely linked to density and distribution of seals, and to the distribution of annual ice in the winter.
- Bears generally follow the retreating ice in the summer but information on habitat use for offshore areas is limited to information from bears collared from inshore areas.
- Maternal denning sites generally located on land in snowdrifts near the coast but have also been found on sea ice.



Polar Bear
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Overall reductions in the amount of summer sea ice available and the timing of break-up and freeze-up due to climate warming may change availability of their main prey, seals.
- Environmental contaminants (mainly organochlorines) and marine oil spills.
- Non-renewable resource exploration and development that disturb bears in maternity dens can result in premature abandonment and increased chances of mortality in cubs.
- Over-hunting.

The NWT shares three Polar Bear sub-populations with neighbouring jurisdictions: Southern Beaufort Sea, Northern Beaufort Sea, and Viscount Melville Sound. Recent scientific research suggests the Southern Beaufort Sea population is likely declining, while the Northern Beaufort is considered stable. The Viscount Melville population is being harvested with the management goal of population growth. Polar Bear sub-population data is out-dated in that area and needs updating in collaboration with Nunavut.

Gordon Court

Did you know?

- Polar Bear skin is black, which helps them retain heat from the sun.
- In the NWT, Polar Bear hunting is strictly managed through a quota system recommended by the wildlife co-management boards.

ENDANGERED

Eskimo Curlew

Numenius borealis

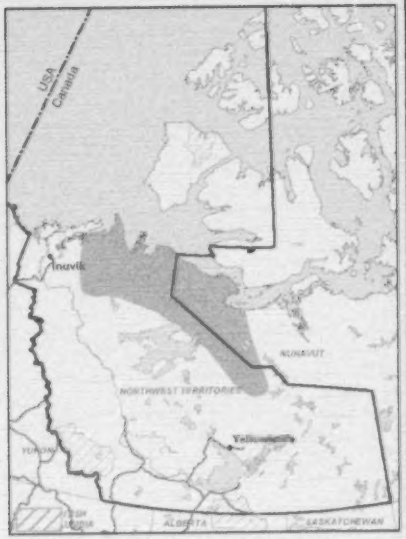
The Eskimo Curlew is a mottled brownish shorebird with long legs and a long, thin, slightly down-curving bill. It can be confused with its close relative, the Whimbrel, but is smaller (the size of a pigeon) and does not have the Whimbrel's distinct central head stripe.

Weight: 270 to 454 g (9.5 to 16.0 oz)
Length: 32 to 37 cm (13 to 15 in)

Report Eskimo Curlew sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Known breeding habitat consisted of upland tundra, treeless dwarf shrub and grass tundra, and grassy meadow habitat.

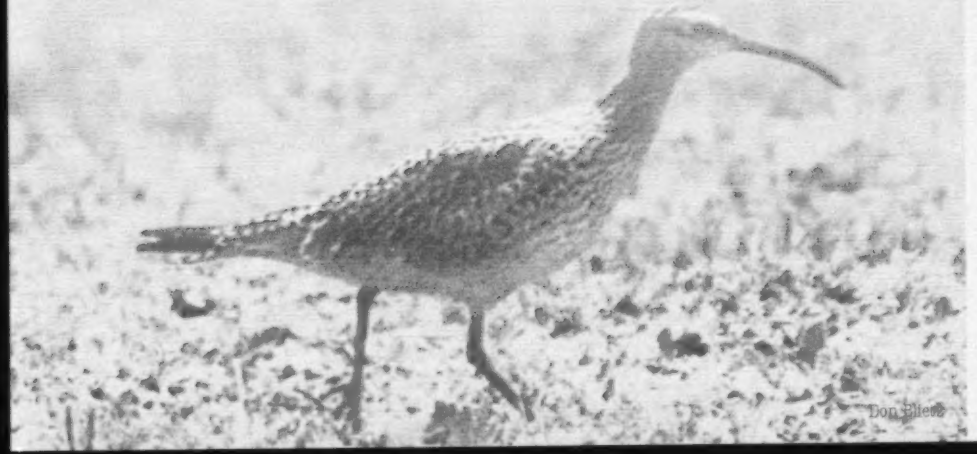


Eskimo Curlew
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss and degradation of potential breeding habitat.

Eskimo Curlews once nested abundantly in the barrens of the NWT. During fall migration, huge flocks flew to the east coast and then non-stop to Argentina. Spring migration was through Texas and the mid-western states, with some birds found in the Canadian Prairies. Eskimo Curlews were hunted to near extinction during the 19th century.



Don Ellis

Did you know?

- The Eskimo Curlew has been near extinction for much of the last century. There have been unconfirmed sightings in the NWT but the last confirmed sighting was in 1963.
- There has been no evidence of nesting since 1866.
- A species can be classified as extinct if 50 years have passed since the last credible record, there's no remaining habitat, or there is information to confirm extinction.
- Scientists have determined that recovery of this species is not feasible at this time.
- The Eskimo Curlew had only two known breeding locations, both in the NWT: at the base of Bathurst Peninsula in the Anderson River area, and in the region of Amundsen Gulf-Coronation Gulf-Coppermine River.

ENDANGERED

Whooping Crane

Grus americana

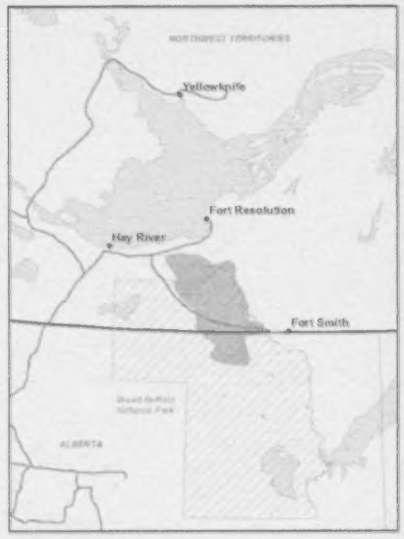
Measuring an impressive 1.6 metres (5 ft), Whooping Cranes are the tallest birds in North America. They have a white body with a red and black head and black-tipped wings.

Weight: 6.4 to 7.3 kg (14 to 16 lb)
Height: 1.5 m (5 ft)

Report Whooping Crane sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Nest in shallow ponds that contain bulrush or sedge, and that are separated by narrow forested ridges in and around the north-east corner of Wood Buffalo National Park.
- The first species at risk in the NWT with critical habitat (meaning the habitat needed for survival or recovery) identified under the federal *Species at Risk Act* in Wood Buffalo National Park.
- Non-breeding Whooping Cranes use a much wider area for several years before breeding in and around Wood Buffalo National Park.



Whooping Crane
Critical Habitat
National Parks

Whooping Cranes winter in southern Texas and arrive on their breeding grounds in the NWT in April and May. During fall migration, they spend up to a month in Saskatchewan. Whooping Cranes usually lay two eggs in a nest consisting of a pile of vegetation in shallow water. Usually only one of the chicks survives to fly south in September. Whooping Cranes eat small fish, amphibians and other animals, insects, roots, berries and grain. They almost went extinct in the 1940s due to habitat loss in their prairie breeding grounds and overharvesting by settlers.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation.
- Disturbance on breeding grounds (aircraft flights and human foot and ATV traffic).
- Predators on breeding grounds (black bear, wolverine, grey wolf, red fox, mink, lynx, and common raven).
- Accidental shooting.
- Collisions with power lines.

Brian Johns

Did you know?

- Whooping Cranes are able to fly non-stop for up to 10 hours, covering distances up to 750 km (466 mi).
- From 21 cranes in the early 1940s, the more than 500 Whooping Cranes in North America today are descendants of only three family lines.
- The population that nests in and around Wood Buffalo National Park is the only natural wild breeding population in the world and in the spring of 2011 the population numbered 279.

THREATENED

Peregrine Falcon

***anatum* Subspecies**

Falco peregrinus

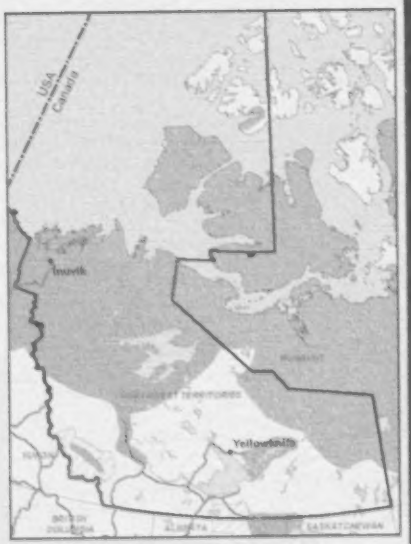
The Peregrine Falcon is a dark-coloured crow-sized bird with long pointed wings, black cheek patches and a dark "cap" on its head.

Weight: Females, 760 to 1200 g (27 to 42 oz)
Males, 600 to 800 g (21 to 28 oz)
Length: 35 to 55 cm (14 to 22 in)

Report Peregrine Falcon sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Sheltered ledges or crevices in cliffs, near water and good foraging areas with a high abundance of small mammals and birds.



anatum Subspecies
tundrius Subspecies
National Parks

Two subspecies of Peregrine Falcon, *anatum* (boreal) and *tundrius* (tundra), occur in the NWT. The *anatum* subspecies breeds mainly in the forest and the *tundrius* subspecies mainly on the tundra. Peregrine Falcon populations suffered a serious decline in the 1970s due to the wide-spread use of DDT as a pesticide. Reduction in DDT use worldwide and active recovery efforts helped populations recover. In 2007, COSEWIC combined these subspecies into one sub-population complex, and recommended it be downlisted to a species of Special Concern under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Human disturbance at nest sites from cabin building, recreational activities.
- Increased development along the Mackenzie River, as well as resource exploration or development in other areas.
- Other threats include poaching of eggs for falconry, declining songbird or seabird prey populations due to climate change and changes in ocean productivity, and susceptibility to DDT and organochlorine pesticide contamination, which causes reproductive failure due to softening of egg shells.

Gordon Court

Did you know?

- The NWT *Wildlife Act* protects all raptor eggs, nests and individuals, making it illegal to hunt, possess or export Peregrine Falcons (or their parts) without a permit.
- Peregrines can reach speeds of more than 320 kph (200 mph) when diving for their prey.
- Successful recovery efforts over the last 30 years have helped the species recover.

THREATENED

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Contopus cooperi

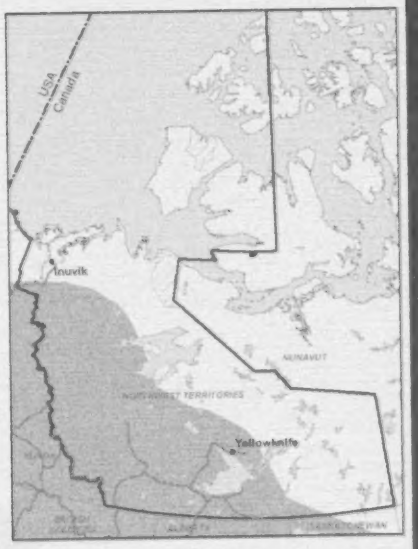
The Olive-sided Flycatcher is a deep olive-grey with a white breast and belly. The dark patches on either side of its white belly look like an unbuttoned vest. The upper portion of its stout bill is dark, and the lower bill is light with a black tip.

Weight: 32 to 37 g (1.1 to 1.3 oz)
Length: 18 to 20 cm (7 to 9 in)

Report Olive-sided Flycatcher sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Within the boreal forest, typically near open areas containing tall trees or snags for perching.
- Young forest after a forest fire or clear-cut.



Olive-sided Flycatcher
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Threats to the species are uncertain and may be more applicable to their southern breeding range and wintering range.

The Olive-sided Flycatcher arrives in the NWT in late May and early June. Females incubate three to four eggs for about 15 days. The Olive-sided Flycatcher leaves the NWT in late July to early August and winters in South and Central America. It eats flying insects. Although the reasons are unclear, many areas outside the north have reported significant declines in the numbers of Olive-sided Flycatchers.

Tim Zurowski

Did you know?

- The Olive-sided Flycatcher perches on tall trees or snags and waits for insects to fly by before pursuing its prey.
- They have a loud song that sounds like "*quick, THREE BEERS*".
- Females will also sing when agitated or when close to their nest.

THREATENED

Common Nighthawk

Chordeiles minor

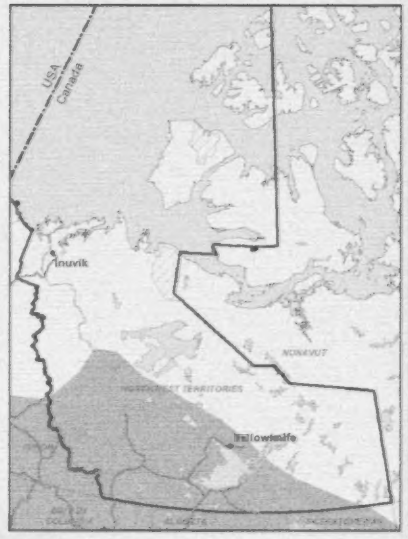
The Common Nighthawk is a medium-sized bird, with dark brown plumage mottled with black, white and buff. It has long, slender, pointed wings and a long slightly notched tail. The head is large and flat, with large eyes, a small bill, and a wide mouth. In flight, a white patch can be seen on the wings of the adults.

Weight: 65 to 98 g (2 to 3.5 oz)
Length: 21 to 25 cm (8 to 10 in)

Report Common Nighthawk sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Nest in a variety of habitats such as sand dunes and beaches, open forests, forest clearings (including recently logged or burned areas), rocky outcrops, peatbogs, marshes, lakeshores, river banks, gravel areas (roads, quarries and flat gravel-covered roofs), and airports.



Common Nighthawk
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Collisions with motor vehicles and aircraft.
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators (cats, foxes, ravens, and gulls).
- Reductions in insect prey due to pesticide use on their southern breeding and wintering grounds.

Common Nighthawks arrive in the NWT to breed in mid-May to early June. They lay two eggs directly on the soil, sand, gravel or bare rock. Chicks stay in the nest area for about three weeks while the male feeds the nestlings and also often the female. Fall migration to wintering areas in South America occurs from mid-August to mid-September. Many areas outside of the NWT have reported significant declines in the numbers of Common Nighthawks for reasons that are unknown.

Did you know?

- Common Nighthawks can be recognized by their loud, nasal *peent* calls and erratic, almost bat-like, flight. They actively pursue flying insects at dusk and dawn, often feeding on insects attracted to lights and insects swarming over bodies of water.
- Common Nighthawks are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at both dawn and dusk.
- Females can be distinguished from males by their throat band, which is pale yellow rather than white. The throat band on juveniles is mottled or absent.

THREATENED

Canada Warbler

Wilsonia canadensis

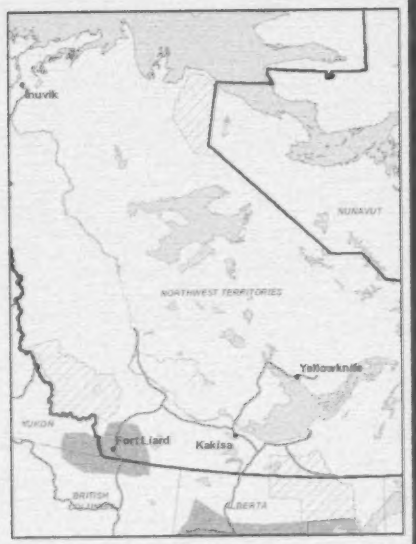
The Canada Warbler is a small brightly coloured songbird with bluish grey upper-parts and yellow under-parts. A series of patterned black spots form a "necklace" on its bright yellow breast, but tends to be greyer and less defined in the females. Other features such as the white eye ring, thin pointed bill and white feathers at the base of the tail help to distinguish this bird from similar species.

Weight: 9 to 13 g (0.3 to 0.5 oz)
Length: 12 to 15 cm (4.7 to 5.9 in)

Report Canada Warbler sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Moist deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous boreal forest with a well developed shrub layer, often on steep slopes.



Canada Warbler
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss and degradation of breeding habitat.
- Human activity and declining food sources in the boreal forest.

Canada Warblers have been found nesting in the southern NWT (from Fort Simpson to Kakisa). They arrive in the NWT from late-May to early-June. The females lay four to five eggs and incubate them for 12 days. They leave the NWT from late-July to early-August for wintering grounds in South America. They eat flying insects and spiders captured in flight or collected on the ground. The Canada Warbler population has declined by 85% over the last 40 years in Canada but the reasons for decline remain unidentified. Loss of forest on the wintering grounds in South America may be contributing to population declines.

John Reaume

Did you know?

- The Canada Warbler is one of the last warblers to arrive in the NWT in the spring and one of the first to leave in the fall.
- This warbler received its name from its discovery in Canada, where the majority of its breeding range occurs.
- A group of warblers has many collective nouns, including a "bouquet", "confusion", "fall" and "wrench" of warblers.
- Brown-headed Cowbirds are known to lay their eggs in nests of Canada Warblers who then incubate and raise their young.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Yellow Rail

Coturnicops noveboracensis

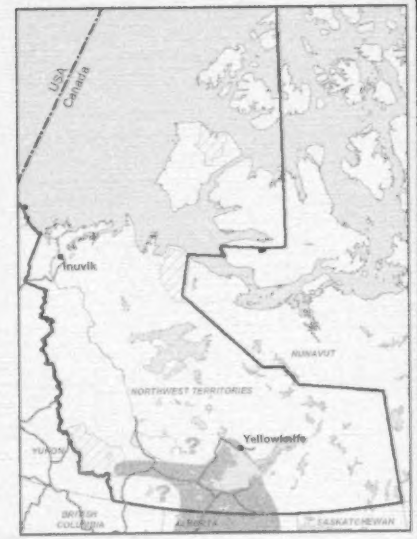
The Yellow Rail is a small bird with a short tail, short bill, and buffy plumage. The wide dark stripes on its back are crossed by white bars. The white wing patch, which is visible in flight, helps distinguish Yellow Rails from other similar marsh birds.

Weight: Males, 60 g (2 oz)
Length: 15 to 19 cm (5.9 to 7.5 in)

Report Yellow Rail sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Nests in marshes dominated by sedges and grasses, wet meadows, and shrubby wetlands.
- Nesting areas have little or no standing water (generally 0 to 12 cm or 0 to 5 in) and the ground is saturated with water throughout the summer.
- Suitable habitat exists in other areas but has not been confirmed due to their nocturnal and elusive habits and limited surveys.

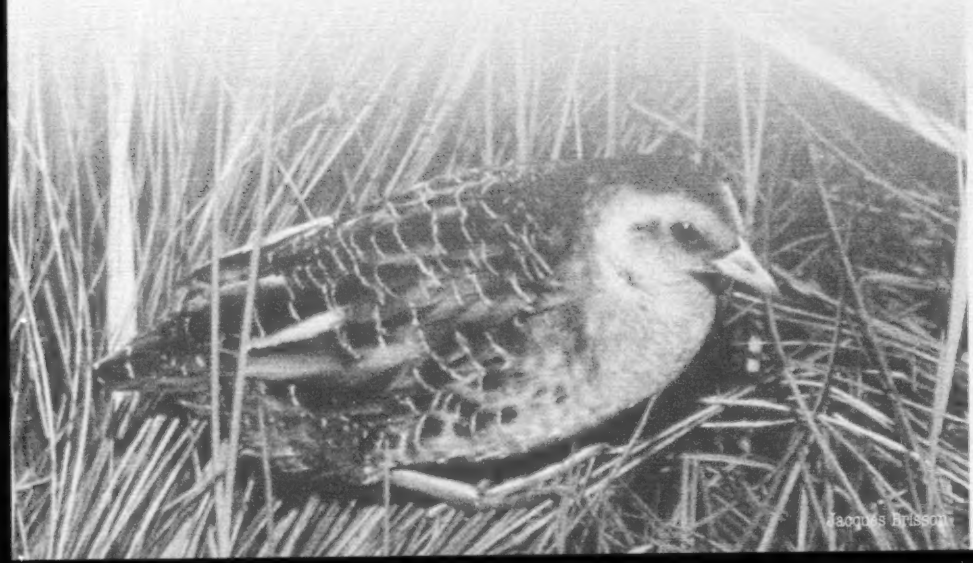


Yellow Rail
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation.
- Collisions with towers and other structures during migration.
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators (foxes and ravens).

Yellow Rails breed in Canada and the northern United States and winter on the East and Gulf coasts of the United States. They likely arrive in the NWT in the latter part of May and nesting occurs in June and possibly July. Females lay seven to ten eggs on nests built on or just above the ground that are concealed with a canopy of dead vegetation. Habitat loss, especially on their wintering grounds, has particularly affected Yellow Rails.



Jacques Brisson

Did you know?

- Yellow Rails are rarely seen. They expertly hide in the dense marsh vegetation, aided by their camouflaged plumage.
- Yellow Rails mostly call throughout the darkest part of the night.
- The unique call of the Yellow Rail is a rapid series of five monotonous and metallic ticks (or clicks) sounding like two pebbles or coins tapped together: *tick-tick, tick-tick-tick*. The clicking can be heard up to a kilometre away.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Rusty Blackbird

Euphagus carolinus

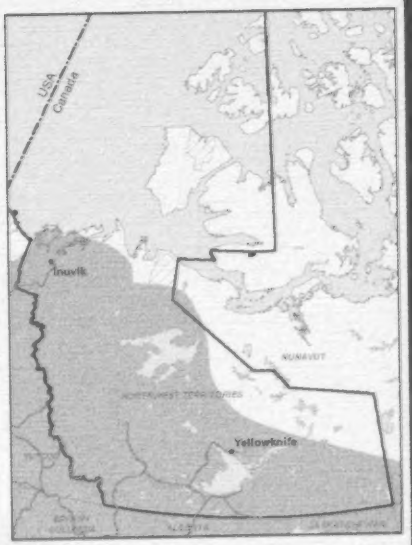
Rusty Blackbirds are medium-sized forest birds. Males are black with a faint greenish gloss on the body and violet gloss on the head and neck. Females are brownish-grey without gloss. The edge of their feathers is rust coloured in fall on both males and females.

Weight: 45 to 80 g (1.6 to 2.8 oz)
Length: 21 to 25 cm (8.2 to 9.8 in)

Report Rusty Blackbird sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Throughout the boreal forest, in wetland areas during spring, summer and fall.
- Typically congregate into flocks in the fall and migrate to the south and east-central United States.
- Breeds near open water in treed wetlands (bogs, fens, swamps) often in loose colonies.



Rusty Blackbird
National Parks

Rusty Blackbirds live in the boreal forest of the NWT from early May to mid-October. There has been a 90% reduction in the population of Rusty Blackbirds in North America over the last 30 years. Declines in the NWT may be less severe than other areas due to the relative intactness of their habitat.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Known threats occur mainly on their winter range in the US and are thought to include conversion of wintering grounds to agricultural lands and bird control programs.

Samuel Denault

Did you know?

- Rusty Blackbirds rely almost exclusively on aquatic insects and larvae for food.
- This is one of the few birds requiring wooded wetlands both in the summer and winter.
- None of the species of blackbirds are protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, because they were considered a pest species when the act was first passed in 1917. In the NWT, they are protected under the NWT *Wildlife Act*.

For the most current information, visit: sararegistry.gc.ca

THREATENED

Northern Wolffish

Anarhichas denticulatus

The Northern Wolffish is a thick, heavy-set fish with a pointed snout, small eyes, small tail and no pelvic fins. It has prominent canine-like teeth in the front of the jaws. These fish are grey to dark chocolate in colour with a light violet sheen, often with numerous but indistinct dark bars or spots.

Weight: 13.5 to 20 kg (30 to 44 lb)
Length: 0.8 to 1.45 m (2.6 to 4.8 ft)

Report Northern Wolffish sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

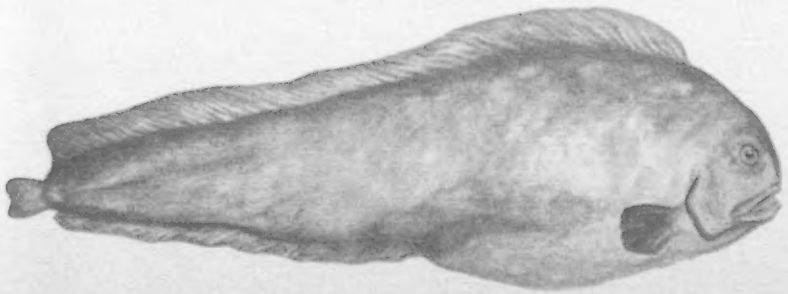
- Offshore waters over soft bottoms and boulders, at depths of 150 to 900 m (490 to 2950 ft) and in temperatures below 5°C (32°F).

Northern Wolffish
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Predation by ringed seals.

The Northern Wolffish is a large solitary fish that is slow-growing and long-lived. It inhabits cold, deep ocean waters and preys on jellyfish, sea urchins, crabs and starfish. This fish does not undertake long migrations and the size of its territory is very restricted. Northern Wolffish reach maturity at five years of age and can live to 14 years. Northern Wolffish have been reported in only two locations in the NWT: Prince Albert Sound on western Victoria Island and Mould Bay on Prince Patrick Island.



G. Taylor © Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Did you know?

- Northern Wolffish use large rocks for shelter and to build their nests, where they spawn late in the year.
- The fearsome teeth of the Northern Wolffish ensure that it has few natural predators.
- In most areas this fish is not eaten by humans because of its watery and jelly-like flesh.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Northern Leopard Frog

Western Boreal/Prairie Populations

Lithobates pipiens

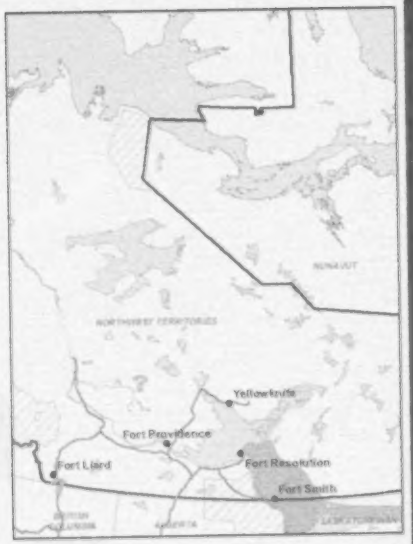
The Northern Leopard Frog is usually green, or sometimes brownish, with dark spots surrounded by distinct light borders, and an unmarked, milky-white underside. Newly hatched tadpoles are slender and black.

Length: Newly hatched tadpole: 8 mm (0.3 in)
Adult (snout-to-vent): 5 to 11 cm (1.9 to 4.3 in)

Report Northern Leopard Frog sightings to Wildlife@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Breeds in lakes, ponds, marshes and flooded areas of streams.
- Summer ranges include meadows and grasslands.
- Over-winters in the unfrozen bottoms of rivers and lakes.



Northern Leopard Frog
Historic Range
National Parks

Northern Leopard Frogs are uncommon in the NWT, having only been found near the Slave, Taltson, and Tazin rivers. The only known over-wintering or hibernation site was Frog Rock on the Taltson River which is no longer occupied. Their call is a long drawn-out rattling snore, usually ending with several rapid short grunts. The number of Northern Leopard Frogs has declined in many parts of western Canada since 1980. The occupied range in the NWT has shrunk since the late 1980s. The cause of population and range changes remains unknown.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Hydro-electrical development could lead to loss of some over-wintering habitat.
- Climate variability (drought, fluctuating winter temperatures and freezing rain).
- Diseases (ranaviruses and chytrid fungus).

Leslie Bol

Did you know?

- Northern Leopard Frogs may be more widely distributed than previously thought in the NWT. They may have been heard calling on the Horn Plateau and along the K-29 road near Fort Liard.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Western Toad

Anaxyrus boreas

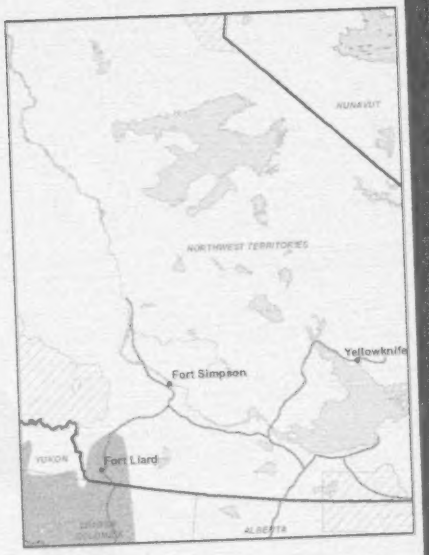
Western Toads are usually green or brown with reddish-brown "warts" and a light stripe down the middle of the back. Newly hatched tadpoles and toadlets are black.

Length: Newly hatched tadpole: 1 cm (0.4 in)
Adult (snout to vent): 5 to 12 cm (1.9 to 4.7 in)

Report Western Toad sightings to Wildlife@GOV.NT.CA

Typical Habitat

- Breed in shallow silty or sandy ponds, lake shores, and roadside ditches.
- Summer ranges include shrubby-forested areas, wet shrublands, avalanche slopes, and meadows.
- Over-winter by burrowing in the ground with snow cover deep enough (up to 1.3 m / 4.2 ft) to prevent freezing and moist enough to prevent their skin from drying.



Western Toad
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Climate variability (drought, fluctuating winter temperatures, freezing rain, low snow cover).
- Diseases (ranaviruses and chytrid fungus).

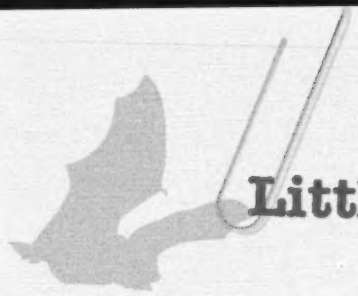
Western Toads are found in the Dehcho region. They are nocturnal and difficult to find outside the spring breeding season when they congregate at ponds and begin calling (a quiet peeping like the sound of chicks). These toads have severely declined in the southern half of their range since the late 1970s, for reasons that are unknown.

Floyd Bertrand

Did you know?

- Western Toads are one of the few amphibians that can live in alpine areas.
- They can travel up to 7 km (4.3 miles) in less than a day, and prefer to walk or crawl rather than hop.
- Western Toads return to the same breeding sites year after year.

For the most current information, visit: nwtspeciesatrisk.ca



ENDANGERED

Little Brown Myotis

Myotis lucifugus

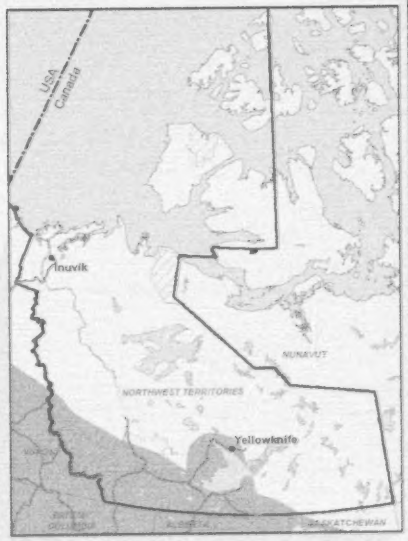
The Little Brown Myotis is a medium sized bat with yellow or olive to blackish coloured fur on its back. Fur on its underside is lighter and goes from light brown to tan. Females are slightly larger than males and produce usually one, sometimes two, young (called pups) per year.

Wingspan: 22 to 27 cm (9 to 11 in)
Weight: 7 to 14 g (0.3 to 0.5 oz)

Report Little Brown Myotis sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Summer roosts can include man-made structures (like attics), tree cavities, under the bark of trees, in rock crevices and caves.
- Winter hibernation sites (also called bat caves or hibernacula) are usually in caves or mines.



Little Brown Myotis
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- White Nose Syndrome is caused by a fungus *(Geomyces destructans)* that was first found in North America in 2006, and 2010 in Canada.
- Mortality during winter is thought to be caused by starvation when hibernating bats infected by the fungus become active, dehydrated, and hungry.

The Little Brown Myotis is an insect-eating bat found throughout much of Canada. Its overall population size in Canada may be in the several millions but there has not been any effort to get overall numbers. In the NWT, it has been found north and south of Great Slave Lake and in the Dehcho. Since 2006, this bat has been dying in significant numbers in large parts of the US and eastern Canada from a fungus causing White Nose Syndrome. The fungus grows in humid cold environments, typical of the caves where bats hibernate. It is estimated that at the current rate of spread, the fungus will severely impact the entire Canadian population within the next two decades. In February 2012, COSEWIC assessed the species on an emergency basis as Endangered in Canada. With the emergency assessment, the species is eligible for emergency listing under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Did you know?

- Nursing female bats can eat more than their body weight in insects each night.
- The Little Brown Myotis is predicted to be functionally extirpated (less than 1% of its population will remain) in the northeastern US within 20 years.

ENDANGERED

Northern Myotis

Myotis septentrionalis

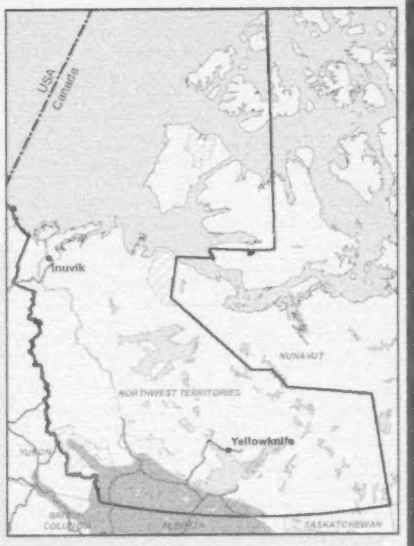
The Northern Myotis is a medium-body sized bat with ears up to 19 mm (0.7 in) in length and dark brown fur on its back. Fur on its underside is often a pale brown. Both the Northern Myotis and Little Brown Myotis sometimes use the same roosts or hibernacula and it is difficult to identify the species if the bats are at a distance.

Wingspan: 23 to 27 cm (9 to 11 in)
Weight: 6 to 9 g (0.2 to 0.3 oz)

Report Northern Myotis sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Summer roosts commonly include man-made structures (like attics), tree cavities, under the bark of trees, rock crevices and caves.
- Winter hibernation sites (also called bat caves or hibernacula) are usually in caves or mines.



Northern Myotis
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- White Nose Syndrome is caused by a fungus (*Geomyces destructans*) that was first found in North America in 2006, and 2010 in Canada.
- Mortality during winter is thought to be caused by starvation when infected by the fungus hibernating bats become active, dehydrated, and hungry.

The Northern Myotis is an insect-eating bat found throughout much of Canada. The Northern Myotis is very similar in size and has similar food habits to the Little Brown Myotis. The main difference is that the Little Brown Myotis often forages over water whereas Northern Myotis forages more within the forest. The Northern Myotis is highly susceptible to White Nose Syndrome. In February 2012, COSEWIC assessed the species on an emergency basis as Endangered in Canada. With the emergency assessment, the species is eligible for emergency listing under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Danny Audie

Did you know?

- These bats use echolocation to catch their prey from tree branches or leaves, as well as on the fly.
- White Nose Syndrome is estimated to be spreading 200 to 400 km (124 to 248 mi) a year in Canada.
- The Northern Myotis used to be called the northern long-eared bat.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Grizzly Bear

Ursus arctos

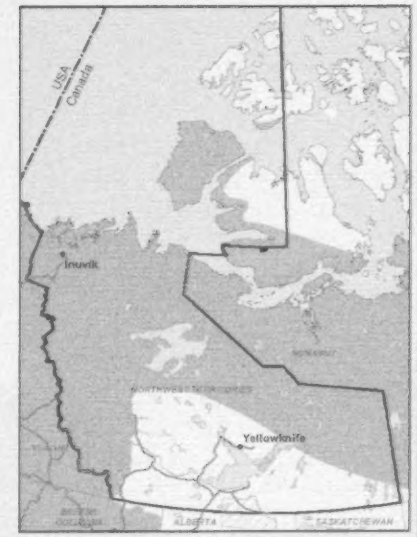
Grizzly Bears are larger than black bears and more heavily built. They can be recognized by their prominent shoulder hump, dish-shaped face and long claws. Colour varies from light gold to almost black, with pale bears being the most common on the barren-lands.

Weight: Females, 120 to 160 kg (260 to 350 lb)
Males, 150 to 250 kg (330 to 550 lb)

Report Grizzly Bear sightings to: Wildlife085@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Open or semi-forested areas, most commonly in alpine and subalpine terrain, on the tundra, and less commonly in the boreal forest.
- Grizzly Bears are becoming more common in areas of the NWT and Nunavut where they used to be rarely seen.



Grizzly Bear
Areas of Increased Presence
National Parks

Grizzly Bears in the NWT, and throughout their range in Canada, are sensitive to population declines because they do not reproduce until they are between six and eight years of age, they have small litters (one to three cubs), and there are three to five years between litters.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Individual bears move great distances so they may be exposed to the negative effects of human developments or activities, even when these activities occur at a considerable distance from the core range.
- Human activity such as campsites and industrial development in the NWT may lead to bear-human conflicts and human-caused mortalities.

Gordon Beanlands

Did you know?

- Grizzly Bears can travel long distances and require large areas of habitat. One bear collared on the tundra traveled 471 km (292 mi) in 23 days.
- Bears are very powerful animals. Learn to avoid conflicts with bears and always travel in groups.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Collared Pika

Ochotona collaris

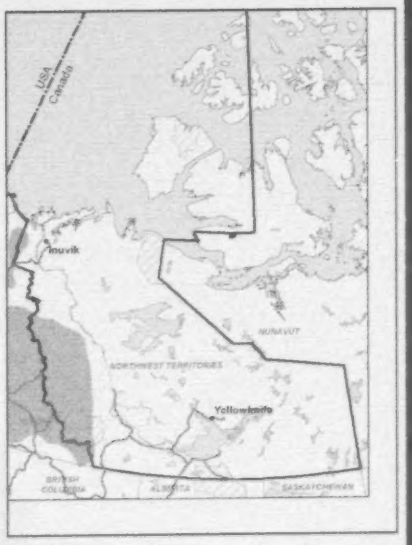
Collared Pika are a small, solitary member of a group of species that includes rabbits and hares. Pikas spend long hours harvesting herbs and grasses making hay-piles to supply food during the winter.

Weight: 130 to 185 g (4.5 to 6.5 oz)
Length: 178 to 198 mm (7 to 7.5 in)

Report Collared Pika sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Collared Pikas mostly live in cool and dry mountain boulder fields, or talus, with nearby meadows. The boulders help shelter the pika from weather and predators.
- The Mackenzie River in the NWT likely acts as a barrier on the eastern edge of its range. The Liard River valley may form a barrier between the Collared Pika and the more southern American Pika.



Collared Pika
National Parks

Collared Pika primarily live in the mountain regions of Alaska, Yukon and northern British Columbia. Their range in the NWT extends into the Richardson Mountains west of Aklavik and throughout the Mackenzie Mountains in the Dehcho and Sahtu regions.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Threats related to how climate change affect the Collared Pika in the NWT are unclear.
- The greatest threat to the Collared Pika in other areas is the effect of climate change, including changes in precipitation patterns in spring, and increasing temperature in summer.

John Neaves

Did you know?

- Pikas defend individual territories of about 15 to 25 m (49 to 82 ft).
- Female Pikas only have a 30 day gestation period, give birth to 3 to 4 offspring, and usually do not live longer than 4 years.
- Pikas do not hibernate during the winter and survive using stored food.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Wolverine

Western Population

Gulo gulo

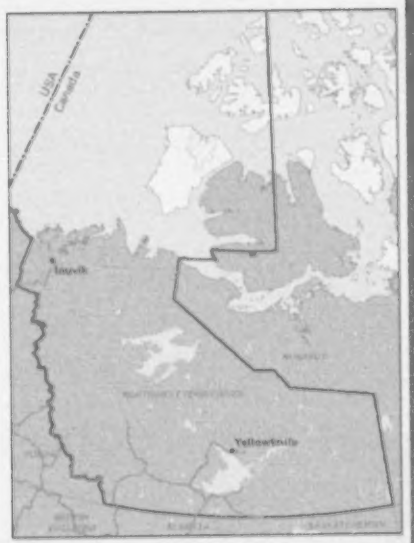
The Wolverine resembles a small, stocky bear. Colour varies from brown to black, often with a pale facial mask and yellowish or tan stripes running along its sides from the shoulders and crossing at the tail.

Weight: Females, 7.5 to 11 kg (16 to 24 lb)
Males, 12 to 16 kg (26 to 35 lb)

Report Wolverine Sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Wide variety of habitats, from the boreal forest, to alpine tundra and barren-lands.
- Can travel long distances and require large wilderness areas with adequate year-round food supplies.



Wolverine
National Parks

Wolverine population densities are low but stable in the NWT. They are sensitive to disturbances because they only breed every two years, have small litters, and kits can have high mortality rates.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Human development or activities, even if these disturbances are a considerable distance from the core range of a Wolverine.
- Disturbances to denning areas.
- Human-caused mortalities due to conflicts.

Rob Gau

Did you know?

- Wolverine fur is frost and ice resistant, and therefore highly valued for parka trim.
- They have large paws that help them move easily on top of crusted snow.
- They have strong jaws that allow them to crush bones and frozen food.

ENDANGERED

Red Knot

rufa Subspecies

Calidris canutus rufa

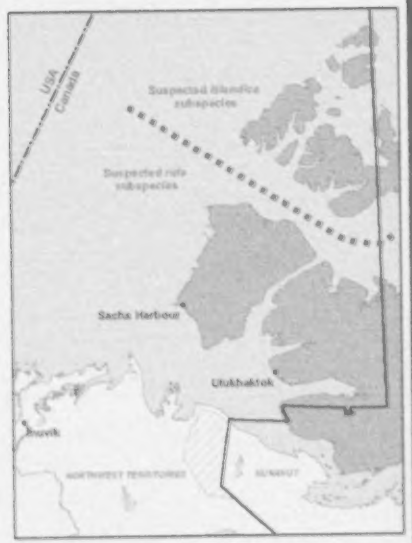
The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird with a small head, straight black bill (tapering from thick base to thinner tip) and long tapered wings giving an elongated streamlined profile to the body. Red Knots in breeding plumage have a red face, breast and belly. The *rufa* Red Knot breeding plumage is more pale and 'washed out' than the *islandica* subspecies.

Length: 23 to 25 cm (9 to 10 in)
Weight: 135 g (5 oz)

Report Red Knot sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Barren habitats in the Arctic such as windswept ridges, slopes, or plateaus.
- Nests usually placed in a small patch of vegetation within about 500 m (1640 ft) of a pond, wetland or waterbody.



Red Knot (*rufa* and *islandica*)
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.

The Red Knot *rufa* subspecies is one of two Red Knot subspecies known to breed in the NWT. The *rufa* subspecies breeds in the central Canadian Arctic, potentially including Banks and the western Victoria Island in the NWT and winters in southern Chile and Argentina. Both subspecies of knots lay three or four eggs in the last half of June and the chicks hatch in mid-July. The Red Knot *rufa* subspecies population has dramatically declined since the 1980s due to a decrease in their food source on their migration route.

Did you know?

- A critical northward migration stopover for *rufa* Red Knots is Delaware Bay in New Jersey, U.S.A. Their migration is timed to coincide with the spawing of Horseshoe Crabs. The Horseshoe Crab eggs are a very important food source for migrating *rufa* Red Knots because the eggs, unlike any other food resource, are immediately metabolized into fat. The birds must double their weight at Delaware Bay to successfully continue their northward migration to the breeding grounds.
- There is a third subspecies of Red Knot, called *roselaari* that is federally listed as Threatened and may also breed in the NWT. Work is underway to confirm whether *roselaari* occurs in the NWT.

For the most current information, visit: sararegistry.gc.ca

THREATENED

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

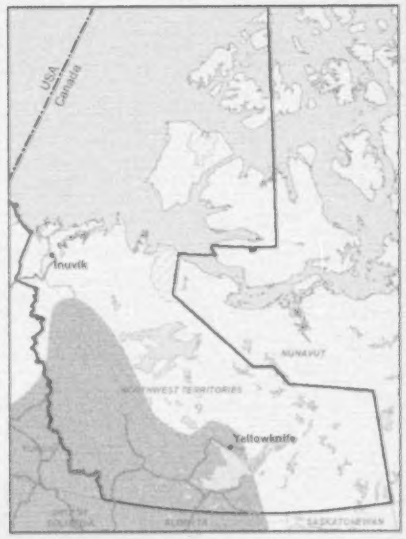
The Barn Swallow is a small bird easily recognized by its steely-blue upper-parts, cinnamon under-parts, chestnut throat and forehead, and by its deeply forked tail. Sexes have similar plumage, but males have longer outer tail-streamers than females and tend to be darker chestnut on their under-parts.

Weight: 17 to 20 g (0.6 to 0.7 oz)
Length: 15 to 18 cm (5.9 to 7.1 in)

Report Barn Swallow sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Nests on man-made features such as buildings, garages, barns, bridges and road culverts, as well as natural habitats such as caves, and crevices in cliff faces.
- Forages over open habitats such as wetlands, lake and river shorelines.

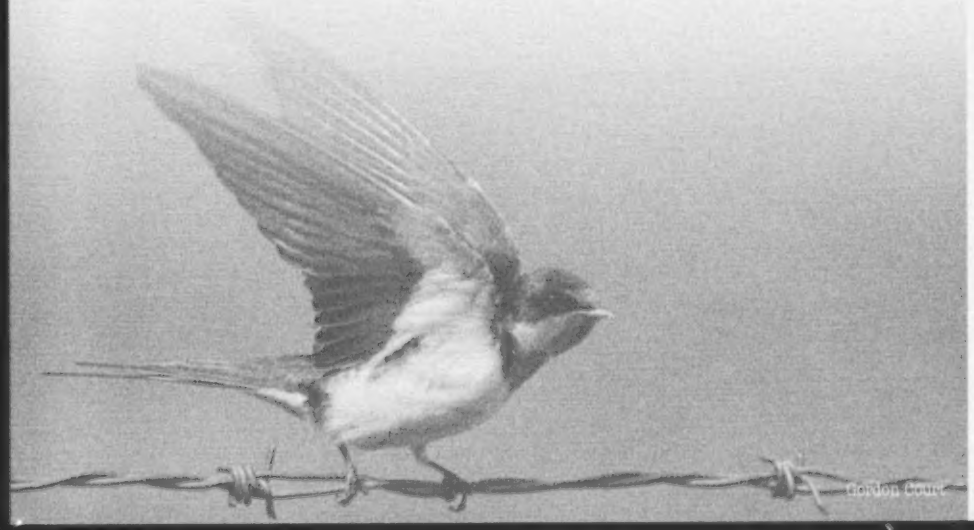


Barn Swallow
National Parks

The Barn Swallow is the most widespread species of swallow in the world and is found on every continent except Antarctica. It breeds across much of North America and winters throughout Central and South America. In Canada, it breeds in all provinces and territories except Nunavut. Like many other species of birds that feed on flying insects, the Barn Swallow has experienced declines of about 76% since the 1970s, but the reasons for the declines are not well understood.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Large-scale decline or some other change in insect populations.
- Direct and indirect mortality due to climactic events (cold snaps) on their breeding grounds.
- In southern ranges, loss of nesting and foraging habitat due to changes in farming practices.



gordon court

Did you know?

- Barn Swallow nests are primarily made of mud, often mixed with grasses and stems, which they collect in their beak and attach to a ledge or vertical surface. They often return to the same nesting site, and may even reuse an old nest from previous years.
- Preferring to nest in man-made structures, it's estimated that only about 1% of Barn Swallows in Canada currently use natural nesting sites.
- Barn Swallows can be easily distinguished from other swallows by their deeply forked tail with long outer tail streamers.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Red Knot

islandica Subspecies

Calidris canutus islandica

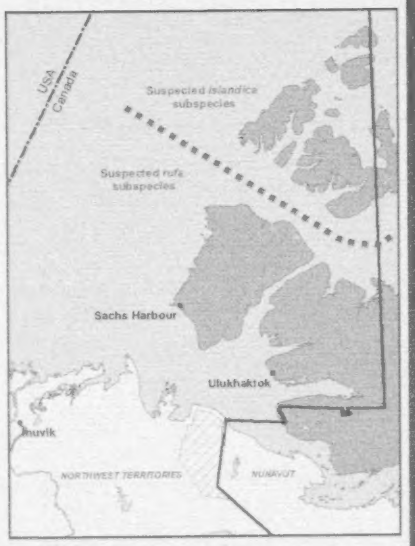
The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird with a small head, straight black bill (tapering from thick base to thinner tip) and long tapered wings giving an elongated streamlined profile to the body. Red Knots in breeding plumage have a red face, breast and belly. The *islandica* Red Knots have more vivid breeding colours than the *rufa*.

Length: 23 to 25 cm (9 to 10 in)
Weight: 135 g (5 oz)

Report Red Knot sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Barren habitats in the Arctic such as windswept ridges, slopes, or plateaus.
- Nests usually placed in a small patch of vegetation within about 500 m (1640 ft) of a pond, wetland or waterbody.



Red Knot (*rufa* and *islandica*)
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.

The Red Knot islandica subspecies is one of two subspecies of Red Knot known to breed in the NWT. The islandica subspecies breeds on the high arctic islands north of Banks Island and winters in northwest Europe. Both subspecies of knots lay three or four eggs in the last half of June and the chicks hatch in mid-July. The Red Knot islandica subspecies population has declined since the 1980s due to a decrease in their food source on their wintering grounds.

Jennie Rausch

Did you know?

- Nests are extremely hard to find because red knots are well camouflaged and do not leave the nest, even when approached.
- To prepare for migration to their breeding grounds, Red Knots increase the size of the parts of their body used for flying (heart and flight muscles) and decrease the size of the parts not used for flight (digestive system). Once they arrive on their breeding grounds, their reproductive organs increase in size and their heart and flight muscles decrease to normal size.
- There is a third subspecies of Red Knot, called *roselaari*, which is federally listed as Threatened and may also breed in the NWT. Work is underway to confirm whether *roselaari* occurs in the NWT.

For the most current information, visit: sararegistrygcca

SPECIAL CONCERN

Horned Grebe

Western Population

Podiceps auritus

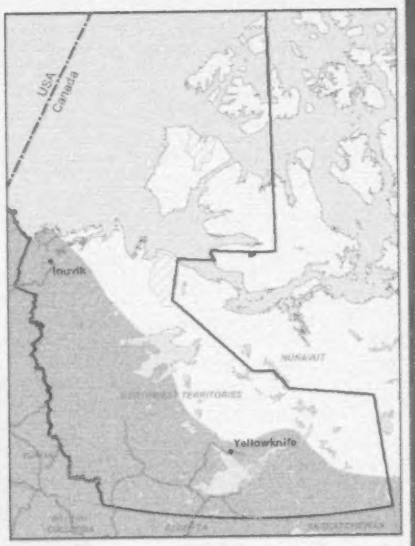
The Horned Grebe is a small waterbird with a short, straight bill with a pale tip. Its breeding plumage includes a distinctive patch of bright buff feathers behind the eye ("horns") and extending back to the nape of the neck and contrasting sharply with its black head. The foreneck, flanks and upper breast are chestnut-red, while its back is black and belly white. This plumage is shared by both sexes.

Weight: 300 to 570 g (10.6 to 20.1 oz)
Length: 15 to 18 cm (5.9 to 7.1 in)

Report Horned Grebe sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca

Typical Habitat

- Small ponds, marshes and wetlands, either natural or man-made.
- Build floating nests in shallow water, among willow, cattails or other plants for protection from predators and shelter from strong waves.



Horned Grebe
National Parks

Horned Grebes arrive in the NWT in May. They lay five to seven eggs that hatch in mid-June and July. Adults leave the NWT by mid-August and young leave by early September and winter along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America. They eat aquatic insects, small fish, and crustaceans. Horned Grebe numbers have declined in their wintering areas but similar declines have not been observed in the NWT.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Increases in nest predators such as: crows, ravens, magpies and various gulls, mink, and foxes.
- Predation on chicks by northern pike and gulls.
- Climate change may cause loss of wetlands due to drought or changes in water quality.

Anthony Levesque

Did you know?

- Once hatched, chicks are almost immediately able to swim and dive underwater, however, during the first few weeks they often ride on the backs of their parents and can even go underwater with them during dives.
- Horned Grebes are known for eating their own feathers and even feed feathers to young chicks to aid in digestion.
- Horned Grebes spend all of their life stages associated with water, so they are thought to be a good indicator of the health of a particular wetland ecosystem.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

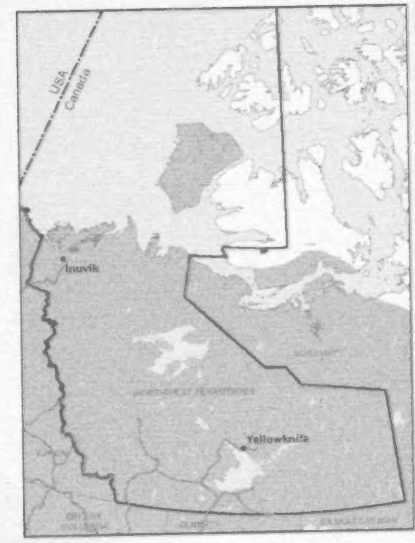
Short-eared Owls have small "ear tufts" and black bands that frame their yellow eyes. Females are slightly larger and darker than males and have heavier streaking.

Weight: Females, 284 to 475 g (10.0 to 16.8 oz)
Males, 206 to 363 g (7.3 to 12.8 oz)
Length: 34 to 42 cm (13.3 to 16.4 in)

Report Short-Eared Owl sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- In summer, nests on the ground in grasslands, tundra, bogs, marshes and other open (non-forested) areas.
- Areas with abundant small mammals to eat (will move around as small mammal populations fluctuate).

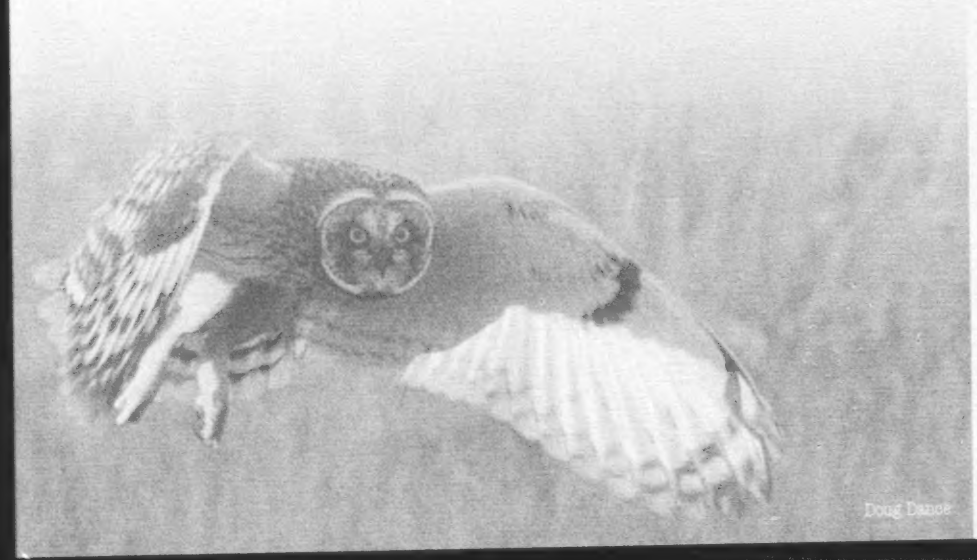


Short-eared Owl
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Limited threats in the NWT.
- Human disturbances during nesting, often resulting in the nest being deserted.

The Short-eared Owl likely arrives in the NWT in April or May. They lay an average of seven eggs by mid-June and the owlets hatch in early July. Short-eared Owls probably leave the NWT by late October. It is uncertain where owls from the NWT winter. Short-eared Owls have suffered significant declines in western Canada since the 1960s, but recent information suggests current numbers may be stable.

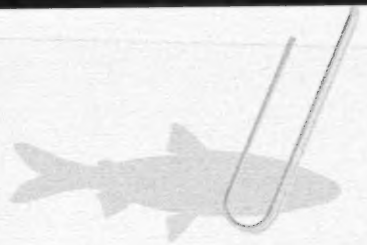


Doug Dance

Did you know?

- One of the best ways to identify a Short-eared Owl is to watch its distinct moth-like flight when hunting (deep wing-beats, occasional hovering, and cutting low over patches of grassland or marsh).
- Short-eared Owls are the only owls that build their own nests.
- They typically search for food at dawn and dusk.

For the most current information, visit: nwtspeciesatrisk.ca



THREATENED

Shortjaw Cisco

Coregonus zenithicus

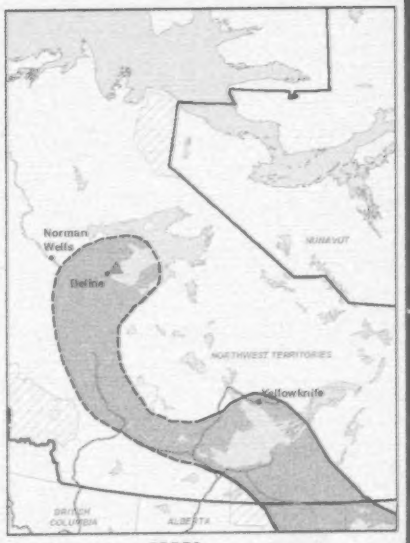
The Shortjaw Cisco has a thin elliptical body that is covered with large, smooth scales. It is mainly silver in colour, with olive or tan colouring on the back and a white belly. Its small toothless mouth has a bottom jaw that is often shorter than, or even with, the upper jaw. The gill rakers (or comb-like structures on the inner surface of the bony arch supporting the gill) number between 32 and 46, which is typically less than other cisco species.

Length: 34 to 42 cm (13.3 to 16.4 in)

Report Shortjaw Cisco sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Reported in Great Slave Lake and Tazin River. Unconfirmed reports from Great Bear Lake.
- Inhabits deep waters, 55 to 180 m (180 to 590 ft), with reports of movement into shallower waters during the spawning season.
- Juveniles have been found in water as shallow as 10 m (33 ft).



Actual Estimated

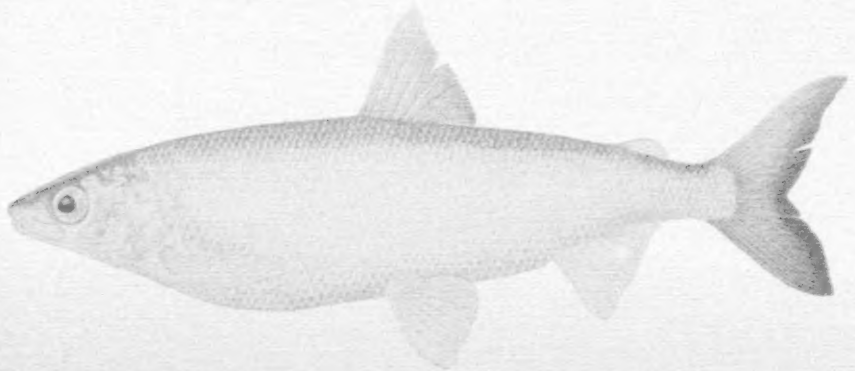
Possible location (to be verified)

National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- May include habitat degradation, climate change, and hybridization with other ciscoes.
- Great Lakes stocks in southern Canada were drastically reduced by over-fishing and competition from introduced and invasive species.

Shortjaw Cisco is a member of the same family as trout and salmon. While best known from the Great Lakes, Shortjaw Cisco has been reported in a few deeper lakes from Ontario to the NWT. Shortjaw Cisco eat shrimp, crustaceans and insects. In turn, they may be eaten by Lake Trout, Northern Pike and Burbot. Shortjaw Cisco spawning occurs in the fall, although there are reports of spring spawning also occurring in Lake Superior. Eggs are deposited on clay bottoms and are left to develop unattended. Lifespan is typically 10-13 years but individuals up to 20 years old have been found in Great Slave Lake.



Paul Vecsei © Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Did you know?

- The Shortjaw Cisco, along with Lake Cisco (previously called Lake Herring), are believed to have ties back to the last ice age in North America, and may have been two of the key colonizing species into lakes created as the glaciers retreated.
- Cisco species identification can be difficult because they can have different shapes and colours even within the same population.

SPECIAL CONCERN

Dolly Varden

Western Arctic Population

Salvelinus malma malma

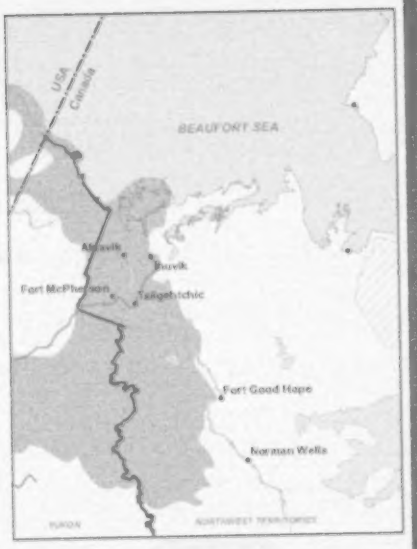
Dolly Varden are laterally compressed (flattened from side-to-side) with large eyes below the top of a round, medium-sized head. Juveniles are coloured brown with a whitish belly, with small red spots on the sides and back, and rectangular marks on their sides and back. Adults have small, pale pink or red spots, with surrounding bluish halos. Spawning sea-run males are brightly coloured and develop a hook on the lower jaw, while females, non-spawners and non-anadromous males are more muted in colour.

Length: Sea water forms, over 35 cm (13.8 in)
Freshwater adults, 30 cm (11.8 in) or less

Report Dolly Varden sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat

- Sea water and fresh water forms spawn and overwinter in freshwater springs where good oxygen and temperature levels provide high quality habitat for survival and egg incubation.
- Gwich'in knowledge indicates that spawning habitat requires relatively warm water, a fast current, and plenty of shoreline cover and vegetation with abundant insect larvae available for food.
- Anadromous Dolly Varden migrate to the sea to feed for the summer and return in the fall to freshwater wintering grounds.

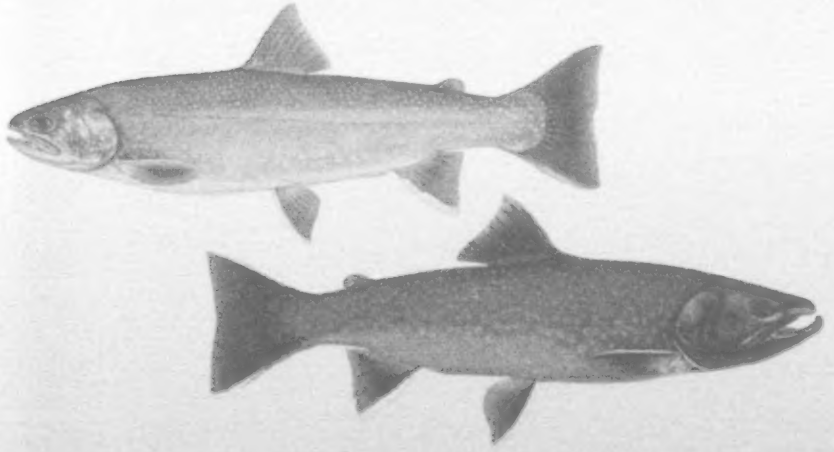


Dolly Varden
National Parks

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Climate change where trends to drier and warmer conditions that lower water levels and reduce groundwater flows could have a dramatic impact on habitat, particularly for spawning and overwintering.
- Other threats may include over-fishing pressures, offshore developments that restrict migrations, and land-based developments that impact fresh water and water quality.

Dolly Varden belong to the same family as trout and salmon. Some individuals may be anadromous (use both sea water and fresh water during their life) or non-anadromous (use fresh water only). In North America, the Western Arctic Population ranges from Alaska and east along the North Slope the Yukon Territory, and east to the Mackenzie River.



Did you know?

- Cross-breeding is not uncommon. There are non-anadromous males that live alongside anadromous fish in the fall and winter and reproduce by "sneaking" into redds (an egg laying site) to spawn with anadromous females.

GLOBAL CONSERVATION CONCERNS

Drummond's Bluebell

Mertensia drummondii

Found in sandy and gravely banks or ridges in six locations in the NWT and Nunavut, and in four sites in Alaska.

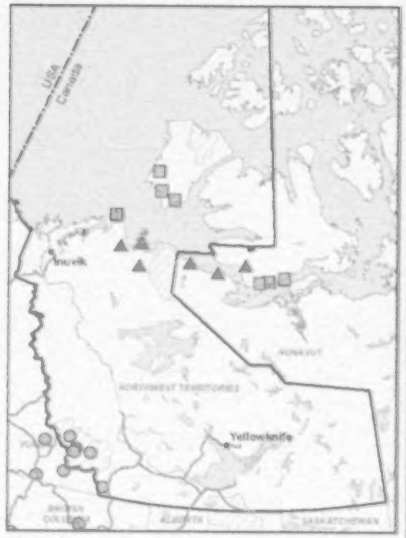
Hairy Northern Rockcress

Braya pilosa

First found in 1826 during an expedition in search of the Northwest Passage and recently reconfirmed on the Cape Bathurst Peninsula in 2004. Field work in 2011 found only 19 populations on Cape Bathurst and the Baillie Islands.

Why is there a Concern?

- These plants are globally rare species that have not yet gone through the processes to assess and list species established by the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, or COSEWIC or the federal *Species at Risk Act* processes, but have been ranked by the NWT General Status Ranking Program.
- The Nahanni Aster and Hairy Northern Rockcress are NWT plants found nowhere else in the world.
- The Raup's Willow, Banks Island Alkali Grass, and Drummond's Bluebell have very restricted distributions limited to the NWT and neighbouring areas.



- Hairy Rockcress
- Nahanni Aster
- Banks Island Alkali Grass
- Raup's Willow
- Drummond's Bluebell
- National Parks

Nahanni Aster

Symphyotrichum nahannense

Only found in four or five moist areas near hot springs in Nahanni National Park Reserve, often near moss mounds, loose tufa (a type of calcite rock) sand and gravel, or along the banks of streams or seeps.

Raup's Willow

Salix raupii

Prefers gravel floodplains and treed bogs and has only been found in two locations in the south-western NWT, three in the Yukon, three in British Columbia, and two in Alberta.

Banks Island Alkali Grass

Puccinellia banksiensis

Found infrequently in frost-heaved, densely vegetated tundra near the shores of inland freshwater lakes in three locations on Banks Island in the NWT, four in Nunavut, and one in Alaska.

Did you know?

- Some areas of the NWT remained glacier-free during the last ice age, which may have allowed species, such as these five plant species, to survive. Knowledge on these species and areas is limited.

For the most current information, visit:
nwtspeciesatrisk.ca

Report rare plant locations to:
sara@gov.nt.ca

Appendix A

SPECIES AT RISK IN THE NWT AT A GLANCE

NWT Region
Wek'èezhìi Co-management Lands
National Parks

ASSESSING – COSEWIC uses the results of the General Status Ranking Program along with other information to prioritize which new species the committee will assess in detail. To assess species at risk, COSEWIC evaluates the best available information relevant to assessing a species' risk of extinction or extirpation, which it may obtain from any credible source of knowledge of the species and its habitat. The evaluation process is independent, open and transparent.

LISTING – Some species in the NWT are legally listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, the legislation for the protection of species at risk in Canada. At the time of printing, there were no species at risk assessed or listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

	Species	COSEWIC Assessment	Federal List *Species at Risk Act*	South Slave	Dehcho	North Slave/ Tlicho	Sahtu	Gwich'in	Inuvialuit
Mammals	Bowhead Whale (Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population)	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
	Dolphin-Union Caribou	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
	Grey Whale (Eastern North Pacific population)	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
	Grizzly (Northwestern population)	Special Concern	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Little Brown Myotis	Endangered	No status	✓	✓	✓			
	Northern Myotis	Endangered	No status	✓	✓				
	Peary Caribou	Endangered	Endangered						✓
	Polar Bear	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
	Wolverine (Western population)	Special Concern	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Wood Bison	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓	✓			
	Woodland Caribou (Boreal population)	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Woodland Caribou (Northern Mountain population)	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓		✓	✓	
Birds	Barn Swallow	Threatened	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Canada Warbler	Threatened	Threatened		✓				
	Common Nighthawk	Threatened	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Endangered						
	Horned Grebe (Western population)	Special Concern	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ivory Gull*	Endangered	Endangered						✓

Canada Warbler Craig Machtans

	Species	COSEWIC Assessment	Federal List *Species at Risk Act*	South Slave	Dehcho	North Slave/ Tlicho	Sahtu	Gwich'in	Inuvialuit
Birds	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Peregrine Falcon (*anatum* subspecies)**	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Peregrine Falcon (*anatum-tundrius* complex)**	Special Concern	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Red Knot (*islandica* subspecies)	Special Concern	No status						✓
	Red Knot (*rufa* subspecies)	Endangered	No status						✓
	Rusty Blackbird	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Short-eared Owl	Special Concern	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Whooping Crane	Endangered	Endangered	✓					
	Yellow Rail	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓				
Fish	Dolly Varden (Western Arctic population)	Special Concern	No Status				✓	✓	✓
	Northern Wolffish	Threatened	Threatened						✓
	Shortjaw Cisco	Threatened	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Amphibians	Northern Leopard Frog (Western Boreal/Prairie population)	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓					
	Western Toad	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓				
Plants	6 species with Global Conservation Concern			Contact sara@gov.nt.ca for more information					

* Ivory Gulls currently do not breed in the NWT but are an uncommon migrant in the Beaufort Sea.

**In 2007, COSEWIC assessed Peregrine Falcon *anatum* and *tundrius* subspecies as one sub-population complex, and recommended downlisting to Special Concern on the *Species at Risk Act*.

Appendix B

NWT Species at Risk Committee 5-Year Assessment Schedule*

This assessment schedule outlines which species will be assessed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* and when their status is to be assessed. The Species at Risk Committee established a checklist to prioritize species for assessment and used that checklist to prioritize an initial list of species.

2012

Peary Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus pearyi*)
Hairy Northern Rockcress (Plant) (*Braya pilosa*)
Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*)
Woodland Caribou (Boreal Population) (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*)

2013

Barren-ground Caribou (all herds but not Dolphin-Union Caribou) (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*)
Dolphin-Union Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus x pearyi*)
Northern Leopard Frog (*Lithobates pipiens*)

2014

Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*)
Nahanni Aster (Plant) (*Symphyotrichum nahanniense*)
Western Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*)
Wood Bison (*Bison bison athabascae*)

2015

Drummond's Bluebell (Plant) (*Mertensia drummondii*)
Raup's Willow (Plant) (*Salix raupii*)
Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*)
Mountain Goat (*Oreamnos americanus*)

2016

Peregrine Falcon *anatum-tundrius* complex (*Falco peregrinus*)
Canadian Toad (*Anaxyrus hemiophrys*)
Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*)
Red-sided Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)

*The assessment schedule will be revised each year. For the most current information, visit nwtspeciesatrisk.ca.

For More Information

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Environment Canada
Canadian Wildlife Service
867-669-4765
sara.north@ec.gc.ca
speciesatrisk.gc.ca

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
204-983-0600
aquaticspeciesatrisk.ca

Parks Canada Agency
204-984-2416
pc.gc.ca

Federal Species at Risk Funding Sources
- Habitat Stewardship Program
- Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk

sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/funding/default_e.cfm

Peregrine Falcon, Gulick — Steve Matthews

Peary Caribou — Charles Francis

GOVERNMENT OF THE NWT

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Toll-Free 1-855-783-4301
or contact your regional Environment and Natural Resources office.
sara@gov.nt.ca
nwtspeciesatrisk.ca

NWT Species at Risk Stewardship Program Funding
nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=StewardshipProgram

OTHER AGENCIES

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)
cosewic.gc.ca

Species at Risk Committee
nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=SARC

Conference of Management Authorities
nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=CMA

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has released a draft Guidelines For Considering Wildlife at Risk (including SARA Species) in Environmental Impact Assessment in the Mackenzie Valley. The document was produced by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, with help from Environment Canada and the Government of the NWT.
reviewboard.ca

NWT SPECIES at RISK

STEWARDSHIP AND WHAT YOU CAN DO

There are many ways that you can be a steward of the land, animals and plants. The *NWT Species at Risk Stewardship Program* provides funding for projects that support the long-term protection and recovery of species that are at risk or of concern. The federal *Habitat Stewardship Program* funds projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats. The federal *Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk* is designed to help Aboriginal organizations and communities build capacity to enable them to participate actively in the conservation and recovery of species at risk.

On the Salt River First Nation Reserve, Ron Schaefer used NWT Stewardship funds to help protect a Whooping Crane nest site located outside Wood Buffalo National Park by diverting an ATV and snowmobile trail and creating public information signage.

Watching Whooping Cranes

Get involved by sharing your knowledge and telling us your concerns at:

sara@gov.nt.ca

Toll Free: 1-855-783-4301

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